

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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ALLIGATORS RECLASSIFIED IN NINE LOUISIANA PARISHES: HUNTS NOW POSSIBLE

American alligators in nine parishes of Louisiana have been reclassified from "threatened" status to a less restrictive "threatened (similarity of appearance)" category by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The final rulemaking was published in the June 25, 1979, Federal Register. The change in status reflects an increase in alligator numbers in the nine parishes, but retains some Federal protection to protect alligators in other areas where the species is still in jeopardy.

The nine parishes, or counties, are located primarily within Louisiana's coastal zone and include the following: Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Charles, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany.

The major effect of the reclassification will be to permit a controlled harvest of alligators in the nine parishes in accordance with State laws and Federal regulations. Alligators in three other Louisiana parishes--Cameron, Vermilion, and Calcasieu--have been classified "threatened (similarity of appearance)" since 1975. The State of Louisiana has held several controlled alligator hunts in the three parishes.

Once in danger of extinction throughout most of its range, the American alligator has made a remarkable comeback in recent years under strict Federal and State protection. The U.S. alligator population is now estimated

(over)

